

entire region felt the effects of his evil tactics.

We should welcome his death and its complication of Tehran's terrorism-industrial complex, but we must remain vigilant and soberly prepared for even further aggression.

It is completely appropriate that this decision would generate interest and questions from this body. We can and we should learn more about the intelligence and thinking that led to this operation and the plan to defend American personnel and interests in the wake of it.

I am glad the administration will hold an all-Senators briefing on Wednesday. It will be led by Secretary of Defense Esper, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Milley, Secretary of State Pompeo, and CIA Director Haspel.

Unfortunately, in this toxic political environment, some of our colleagues rushed to blame our own government before even knowing the facts, rushed to split hairs about intelligence before being briefed on it, and rushed to downplay Soleimani's evil while presenting our own President as the villain.

Soon after the news broke, one of our distinguished colleagues made a public statement that rightly called Soleimani a "murderer" and then, amazingly, walked that message back when the far left objected to the factual statement. Since then, I believe all of her criticism has been directed at our own President.

Another of our Democratic colleagues has been thinking out loud about Middle East policy on social media. Mere days before President Trump's decision, this Senator tore into the White House for what he described as weakness and inaction. "No one fears us" he complained. "Trump has rendered America impotent in the Middle East." But since the strike, he has done a complete 180. That same Senator has harshly criticized our own President for getting tough. Ludicrously, he and others on the left have accused the administration of committing an illegal act and equated the removal of this terrorist leader with a foreign power assassinating our own Secretary of Defense.

Here is what one expert had to say about it. Jeh Johnson, President Obama's own former Pentagon general counsel and Secretary of Homeland Security, said:

If you believe everything that our government is saying about General Soleimani, he was a lawful military objective, and the president, under his constitutional authority as commander in chief, had ample domestic legal authority to take him out without—

Without—

an additional congressional authorization. Whether he was a terrorist or a general in a military force that was engaged in armed attacks against our people, he was a lawful military objective.

That was the former Secretary of Homeland Security in the Obama administration, Jeh Johnson, an expert on these things.

Our former colleague, Joe Lieberman, who ran for Vice President on the Democratic ticket in 2000, wrote this morning: "In their uniformly skeptical or negative reactions to Soleimani's death, Democrats are . . . creating the risk that the U.S. will be seen as acting and speaking with less authority abroad at this important time." That is how a former Democratic Senator sees it.

The Senate is supposed to be the Chamber where overheated partisan passions give way to sober judgment. Can we not at least wait until we know the facts? Can we not maintain a shred—just a shred—of national unity for 5 minutes—for 5 minutes—before deepening the partisan trenches?

Must Democrats' distaste for this President dominate every thought they express and every decision they make? Is that really the seriousness that this situation deserves?

The full Senate will be briefed on Wednesday. I expect the committees of oversight will also conduct hearings and that the Senators will have plenty of opportunities to discuss our interests and policies in the region.

I urge my colleagues to bring a full awareness of the facts, mindfulness of the long history of Iran's aggression toward the United States and its allies, and a sober understanding of the threat Iran continues to pose.

Could we at least remember we are all Americans first, and we are all in this together?

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in the meantime, at this dangerous time, House Democrats continue to play political games with their partisan impeachment of the Commander in Chief. Last year, House Democrats conducted the least thorough, most rushed, most unfair impeachment inquiry in history. For weeks, Democrats said they could not wait for due process, could not conduct a normal or fair inquiry because removing the President from office was so incredibly urgent—incredibly urgent.

Well, the unseriousness was obvious then and should be even more obvious now because Speaker PELOSI is now sitting on the articles she claimed were so very urgent. She has delayed this indefinitely so the architects of the failed House process can look for ways to reach over here into the Senate and dictate our process as well.

Democrats have tried to insist that the Senate deviate from the unanimous bipartisan precedent set in the 1999 trial of President Clinton and write new rules for President Trump. They have tried to precommit the Senate to redoing House Democrats' slapdash work for them and pursuing avenues Chairman SCHIFF himself didn't bother to pursue.

The Senate has a unanimous bipartisan precedent for when to handle midtrial questions such as witnesses:

in the middle of the trial. That is when that was done the last time, and that is the way it should be done this time.

In 1999, every single U.S. Senator agreed to establish basic parameters for the start of the trial upfront and reserve midtrial questions, such as witnesses, until later. The vote was 100 to 0. That was good enough for President Clinton, so it ought to be good enough for President Trump. Fair is fair.

House Democrats' hunger to break our Senate precedents, just like they broke their own House precedents, could not be more telling, but the Senate does not just bob along on the currents of every news cycle. The House may have been content to scrap their own norms to hurt President Trump, but that is not the Senate. Even with a process this constitutionally serious, even with tensions rising in the Middle East, House Democrats are treating impeachment like a political toy—like a political toy—treating their own effort to remove our Commander in Chief like some frivolous game.

These bizarre stunts do not serve our Constitution or our national security. They erode both. My Democratic colleagues should not plow away American unity in some bizarre intramural competition to see who dislikes the President more.

They should not disdain our Constitution by rushing through a purely partisan impeachment process and then toying around with it. Governing is serious business. The American people deserve better, a lot better than this.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Jovita Carranza, of Illinois, to be Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 329.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 462.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 525.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, James M. Inhofe, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, Todd Young, Shelley Moore Capito, Michael B. Enzi, Lisa Murkowski, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Chuck Grassley, Josh Hawley, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, it has been 4 days since the United States carried out a military operation that killed Major General Qasem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force. In the days since, I have become increasingly alarmed about the strike, a strike that

was carried out with insufficient transparency, without consultation of Congress, and without a clear plan for what comes next.

President Trump had promised to keep the United States out of endless wars in the Middle East. The President's actions, however, have seemingly increased the risk that we could be dragged into exactly such a war. It is indicative of President Trump's foreign policy record, which is riddled by chaotic, uninformed, erratic, and impulsive decision-making without adequate consideration for the consequences.

In just about every foreign policy area President Trump touches, we are worse off than we were before he started with it. Whether it is with China, North Korea, Syria, Russia, the President has careened from one impulsive action to the next, with no coherent strategy. North Korea today—despite what President Trump said, we don't have to worry about them—is a greater nuclear threat than they have ever been. Trump's actions have been disastrous. North Korea has more nuclear weapons, and, by all reports, has either developed or is very close to developing an ICBM that can hit the U.S. mainland. That is a result of President Trump's bumbling.

The situation in Syria is much worse than before. Doing what he did in Syria, pulling out those troops, made no sense to anybody, even the most hawkish foreign policy people we have, and every time the President seems to deal with Putin, Putin seems to come out ahead. Looking at the President's chaotic and rudderless foreign policy in hotspots around the globe, it is hard to conclude that any of the situations are better off than when the President took office 3 years ago. His policies seem to be characterized by erratic, impulsive, and often egotistical behavior, with little regard to a long-term strategy that would advance the interests of the United States.

At times like this, it is essential for Congress to provide a check on the President and assert our constitutional role in matters of war and peace. In my view, President Trump does not—does not—have authority to go to war with Iran. There are several important pieces of legislation that seek to, again, assert Congress's authority and prerogative on these matters.

Senator Kaine has a War Powers Resolution that would force a debate and vote in Congress to seek to prevent further escalation of hostilities with Iran. That resolution will be privileged, so it will have to come to the floor. My colleagues, we are going to vote on it.

Senator Sanders has introduced a bill that would block funding for the war with Iran. I am supportive of both Senator Kaine's and Senator Sanders' efforts, and I urge the Senate to consider both in the coming days.

Additionally, the Trump administration must start acting with greater transparency. By law, the Trump administration must make a notification